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Fifty-eighth session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 9 May 1991, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom)

- Statement by the President
- Cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (continued)
- Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (continued)
- Attainment of self-government or independence by the Trust Territories and the situation in Trust Territories with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued)

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- Cooperation with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued)

- Examination of the annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 September 1990: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

- Organization of work

The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: I should like to commend the Soviet delegation for arriving on time. I consign other delegations to eternal hell-fire.

COOPERATION WITH THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (General Assembly resolutions 2106 B (XX) and 45 (88) (continued)

SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (General Assembly resolutions 3057 (XXVIII) and 45 (105) (continued)

The PRESIDENT: Are there any comments concerning agenda items 8 and 9? If there are none, and if there is no objection, I suggest that the Council decide to take note of the statements made on these items and to conclude consideration of them.

It was so decided.

ATTAINMENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT OR INDEPENDENCE BY THE TRUST TERRITORIES (Trusteeship Council resolution 1369 (XVII) and General Assembly resolution 1413 (XIV)) AND THE SITUATION IN TRUST TERRITORIES WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 45/34)) (continued)

COOPERATION WITH THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (General Assembly resolution 1654 (XVI)) (continued)

The PRESIDENT: Are there any comments on agenda items 10 and 11?

If there are none, and as decided at our last meeting, the Council will take a decision on these items following the adoption of its conclusions and recommendations. I therefore suggest that the Council continue its consideration of agenda items 10 and 11 at its next meeting.

It was so decided.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1990: TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1954)

The PRESIDENT: As there are no further questions at this time for the representatives of the Administering Authority, the Council will continue with the general debate.

Mrs. LIU Jinfeng (China) (interpretation from Chinese): I am very glad to be speaking in the general debate at the fifty-eighth session of the Trusteeship Council.

The Chinese delegation, wishing to contribute to the work of the United Nations Trusteeship System and to promote the advancement of Trust Territories, will continue to participate actively in the Council's deliberations at its current session, during which we look forward to close cooperation with the other member States.

Over the past year the international situation has seen enormous changes. At present the old world structure has disintegrated while a new one has yet to take shape. The world has entered a period of transition from the old structure to a new one. We are glad to note that Security Council resolution 683 (1990), unanimously adopted at a Security Council meeting held on 22 December 1990, has finally led to the partial termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, with respect to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands. China respects the aspirations of the peoples of those three entities, and supported the termination of their status as Trust Territories. Following the termination of the trusteeship, we hope that the political and economic development in those three entities will enter into a new stage.

(Mrs. Liu Jinfeng, China)

In the past few days the Council has considered the annual report submitted by the Administering Authority on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and has heard statements by Council members, the Administering Authority and representatives of Palau, as well as by petitioners. We believe that all this has not only helped the Council to gain a deeper understanding of the current conditions and existing problems in the Trust Territory, but has also contributed to a correct and comprehensive implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement.

The principal task of the international Trusteeship System is to further international peace and security and promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence. We are very pleased to see that over the years the people in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands have made some progress in the political, economic and social fields. That is a result not only of efforts made by the people in the Trust Territory but also of the great deal of work done by the international community, including the United Nations. On the other hand, one can also see from the verbal and written statements submitted by the petitioners at this session that there are still some problems and inadequacies.

At present, Palau is the only entity of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands that remains under the United Nations Trusteeship System. The Chinese Government always supports the principal of national self-determination, and it respects the choice made by the people of Palau, of their own free will, concerning their future political status. The Chinese delegation holds that in order to create the necessary conditions for the realization of self-determination and independent development in Palau the

(Mrs. Liu Jinfeng, China)

Administering Authority should, before the termination of trusteeship there, fulfil to the letter its obligations towards the Trust Territory and meet the just demands of the people in the Trust Territory, so as to enable the people in Palau to achieve self-determination at an early date.

Mr. FELIX-PAGANON (France) (interpretation from French): At the fifty-seventh session of the Trusteeship Council last year, the French delegation, as in previous years, expressed the wish that the peoples of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands would accede as soon as possible to the status of their choice. We are pleased that this has been accomplished for three of the four entities that then composed the Territory at that time: the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

On the unanimous recommendation of the Trusteeship Council, the Security Council on 22 December 1990 adopted its resolution 683 (1990), by which it terminated the Trusteeship Agreement as it applied to those three entities. That opened the way to full implementation of the decisions resulting from the free exercise by those peoples of their right of self-determination. France was honoured to be serving as President of the Trusteeship Council at that vital time for the inhabitants of those Territories. My delegation wishes the inhabitants all success in the new stage they are now entering.

With respect to Palau, the sole remaining Territory under our Council's jurisdiction, we hope that appropriate solutions will be formulated as quickly as possible with a view to bringing about a new status in keeping with the desires of the people.

Pending the achievement of that goal, and so long as the Trusteeship Agreement remains in force, it is, of course, important that the Administering

(Mr. Félix-Paganon, France)

Authority continue to carry out its obligations. In that connection, my delegation notes with satisfaction again this year the assurances the United States delegation has given on this point.

We also welcome the progress made over the past year in the Trust Territory in the political, economic and social fields. My delegation noted with interest the information on that progress set out in the most recent annual report of the Administering Authority, as well as the information supplied by members of the United States delegation. My delegation welcomes the efforts being made in conformity with the Council's recommendations in the area of public works, fisheries, health and the fight against drug trafficking. We listened most carefully to information concerning the draft master plan for Palau.

To be sure, there are difficulties with respect both to the economic and social situation in the Territory and to the prospects for political development. Those difficulties were mentioned, inter alia, by petitioners who addressed the Council. Even if some of their statements seemed to us excessively pessimistic, it is true that the great progress made in the archipelago - including the progress with respect to the democratic nature of institutions and the standard of living of the population - has not yet eliminated certain deficiencies that are a source of legitimate concern to the citizens of Palau.

(Mr. Felix-Paganon, France)

My delegation hopes that these difficulties will continue to be the subject of an ongoing dialogue within the context of the existing cooperation between the authorities of the Territory and the Administering Authority. In that respect, my delegation took note with interest of elements communicated to us regarding measures adopted during the past year with a view to redefining the respective responsibilities of the Administering Authority and the Palauan authorities. We hope that the efforts undertaken thus far to promote the economic and social development of Palau will be continued in the new conditions thus established.

My delegation also hopes that the population of the Territory will be able in the very near future to exercise its right to self-determination and attain the status it will have freely chosen. We take note of the fact that the Administering Authority is willing to lend its assistance to the Palauan authorities, if they should so request, in seeking appropriate solutions relating to the future status of the archipelago.

Before concluding my statement, I should like to pay tribute on behalf of my delegation to the citizens of Palau who, as part of the coalition forces, made a courageous contribution to the success of the operation that led to the liberation of Kuwait.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to hail the representatives of Palau who are participating in the work of our Council's current session, and in particular Mr. Etpison, the President of Palau, who was kind enough to participate personally in our work. I should also like to extend my thanks to the representatives of the Secretariat for the efficiency, competence and commitment with which they have contributed to the smooth functioning of the Council's work.

Mr. BYKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): During the course of the present session, members of the Trusteeship Council have been able to examine thoroughly the report of the Administering Authority - the United States of America - concerning the situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands during the reporting period from 1 October 1989 to 30 September 1990, as well as the working paper prepared by the United Nations Secretariat on that question, contained in document T/L.1277. I take this opportunity to express thanks for the timely submission of those materials. We have also listened carefully to the statements of the representatives of the United States and the statements of the petitioners. At the meetings, members asked substantive questions, stemming from a concern for obtaining the fullest and most material information possible from the representatives of the Administering Authority. These were followed by additional information and explanations. All of this, in our view, facilitated the development of a dialogue and of objective and businesslike consideration at the session of questions relating to the political, economic and social situation in the Trust Territory, as well as measures undertaken with regard to it by the Administering Authority, and on the whole helps to produce a definite, though perhaps not exhaustive, picture of the current situation in the Territory.

The materials considered and the discussion that has taken place show, as we have already mentioned, definite achievements in a number of fields of development of the Trust Territory during the period under review, as well as the assistance rendered to that process by the Administering Authority. Having noted that, however, it would obviously be proper to focus attention as well on the remaining problems and unresolved tasks, on what still must

(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

be done. Some of these were also the subject of a lively exchange of views at the current session of the Trusteeship Council.

As for the fundamental objectives now facing the trusteeship system and the relevant duties of the Administering Authority, everyone is well aware that these are spelled out in the Trusteeship Agreement, the Charter of the United Nations and other pertinent documents of the Organization. They have been referred to here on numerous occasions, and there does not seem to be any need to list them.

Among unresolved problems, note was taken at this session of the continuing financial dependence of the Trust Territory on the Administering Authority, due first and foremost to the failure to achieve an extremely important objective - the self-sufficiency of the Territory's economy, with due regard to local conditions and traditions. This situation makes the Territory's economy, institutions and structures vulnerable. A great deal must still be done to establish the necessary infrastructure, to develop agriculture and local fishing, to provide for the population's employment and vocational training, to establish a system of social security and to maintain the distinctive nature of the local culture.

We need hardly dwell now on the details of these problems, since they have already been raised in the course of previous meetings. There is clearly a need to find effective ways to resolve them. The representatives of the Administering Authority have informed the Council that negotiations with representatives of Palau have been initiated. It is important that such negotiations should be conducted on a mutually acceptable basis, be consonant with the interests of the people of the Territory and promote the achievement of the objectives of the international trusteeship system.

(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

As is well known, the Soviet Union has consistently supported the inalienable right of the Micronesian people to self-determination, self-government or independence and freedom of choice in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Trusteeship Agreement and the Declaration on Decolonization. We believe that the Administering Authority must create all necessary conditions to enable the people of Palau to implement fully, at the proper time, the principle of the free expression of its will concerning the future status of the Territory. The obligations of the Administering Authority under the Trusteeship Agreement and the Charter of the United Nations remain in force until such time as the Security Council, which continues to bear responsibility for Palau, makes the appropriate decision. In that connection, assurances given by the representatives of the United States at this session regarding the intention of the United States to continue to implement fully its commitments under the Trusteeship Agreement concerning the Territory are to be commended.

Also of great importance are the assurances of the representative of the United States that his country has no plans to establish military bases in Palau. These assurances of the United States, together with its position, stated last December to the members of the Security Council, concerning Micronesia as a whole, are in keeping with the developing trend towards the reduction of foreign military presence and the development of comprehensive cooperation in that region.

We express the hope that the present session of the Council will truly serve to benefit progress in the development of Palau and that before the end of next year the Council will see positive results in that regard.

The PRESIDENT: The Council has thus concluded the general debate.

As agreed at our last meeting, I shall call on the representatives of the Administering Authority to make their closing statements. I have been given to understand that Mr. Uherbelau would like to speak first, and I call on him to do so now.

Mr. UHERBELAU (Special Adviser): With your permission, Sir, I wish the Council to note the presence in this Chamber of certain friends and colleagues of Palau, from our part of the Pacific region. We have with us Ambassador Lohia of Papua New Guinea, Ambassador Bugotu of the Solomon Islands, Ambassador O'Brien of New Zealand, and a representative of Fiji, Mr. Savua. On behalf of the people of Palau, I wish to thank them for the interest they have shown with regard to developments in the Trust Territory of Palau. We appreciate their continued support, and look forward to continued close cooperation with our neighbours in the future.

I hope that you, Sir, and the members of the Council are not overly disheartened by the reduction in the size of the Palauan delegation to only two, or rather one, now that Chairman Minoru Ueki is not here. As you are aware, President Etpison had to leave after your opening day last Friday as he had an important meeting to attend to Sunday night. Administration Minister Sandra Pierantozzi, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Hideo Tell and Floor Leader Peter Sugiyama left town to join Treasury Bureau Director Andy Uherbelau and other officals from Palau to present testimony before a United States congressional committee on the Republic's 1992 fiscal year budget request. Our attorneys, Attorney-General Mark Horlings, House and Senate Legislative Counsels Ross Meltzer and Richard Grant, whom some of you have

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met, have also departed after several consultations with Mr. Wayne Cross, the New York lawyer who served as the Republic's defence attorney in the IPSECO case.

The delegation seemed large but it had to be that size as we had a number of important items of business to attend to, including the meeting with Marylin Meyers, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the State Department of the United States, and appearance before the Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs in Washington D.C. last week.

Our closing statement will focus on only two issues: the need for economic self-reliance and the resolution of our future political status. Before proceeding further, however, it is incumbent on me to commend this Council for the vital role it played in the partial termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. What more wonderful Christmas gift could there have been for the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands than to see the birth of their nations, semi-sovereign to some observers, but nation States none the less?

The Palauan delegation salutes the decisive vote on this matter by the Security Council on 22 December 1990. Likewise, we congratulate the Federated States, the Marshalls and, indeed, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas for having successfully reached their respective goals in terms of their future political status. Henceforth they will enjoy the golden fruits of their peoples' right of self-determination.

The representative of the United Kingdom reminded us in his statement yesterday of the need for Palau to have a sound economic base. We could not agree with him more. We too believe that economic self-reliance is in fact a prerequisite for political stability and maturity: you cannot have the one

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without the other. We also agree with his remark that capital projects are never cost-free. A strong and sound economy must have a functioning infrastructure to sustain it and allow it to continue. The Administering Authority is assisting us in this regard by putting together an efficient operation and maintenance programme for the road, sewer and water systems.

The private sector of Palau's economy, as we reported in our opening statement, is on the rise. This means a move away from the national government and its constituent state governments as the primary sources of employment opportunities. The growth of the private sector will, however, inevitably result in certain labour-intensive projects or enterprises requiring highly skilled workers not readily available locally. Demand for labourers is increasing faster than we can train our own people for the labour market. We are keenly aware of this shortcoming. The Micronesian Occupational College, a campus of the Unified College of Micronesia system located on Koror, is expanding its vocational curricula to train the indigenous workforce. The United Nations International Labour Organisation is working with our Ministry of Commerce and Trade to identify training needs and requirements in both the public and the private sectors, and to launch comprehensive programmes to meet them.

Much has been said, both before this Council this week and in the committee rooms of the United States Congress, about an emerging development master plan. We welcome this initiative by the Administering Authority, and, specifically, by Secretary Stella Guerra and her Office of Territorial and International Affairs staff. Our officials are actively participating in formulating this plan so as to ensure that its end product will be our development master plan and not somebody else's for us merely to implement.

(Mr. Uherbelau, Special Adviser)

We reported last Friday that Palau is unique in its opportunity. Perhaps it is a blessing in disguise that this small, emerging Republic is still under- or undeveloped even today. We say this because we have a chance to see for ourselves and learn from the unfortunate mistakes of certain of our sister island neighbours, whose economies blossomed overnight without proper development planning. During the conference for foreign investment and tourism in Palau to which Secretary Guerra alluded, a number of guest speakers, including the Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, reminded us of, and cautioned us against, the insurmountable problems emanating from unplanned, unregulated or uncontrolled growth.

While we may be at the threshold of unprecedented economic growth, we are still at the juncture where we can and must take preventive measures rather than let unplanned development slip past us, and then have to take remedial action to rectify the situation.

(Mr. Uherbelau, Special Adviser)

Palau is ever mindful of the unique beauty of its island surroundings and, in particular, its fragile marine ecology and the scarcity of its land and fisheries resources. Therefore, we are heeding the call of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for ecologically and environmentally sound and sustainable development. As a full member of the South Pacific Commission, the Republic is being assisted by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme in putting together a national report on environment and development. An environmental scientist is being recruited to undertake this work; the scientist's fee and related expenses will be paid by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He or she will work cooperatively with those officials from Palau and the Department of the Interior involved in the development master plan to ensure that no conflicts arise between development objectives and environmental requirements and considerations.

By way of a final word on economic development, the primary beneficiary of development in any country should and must be the indigenous inhabitants of that country. Development under the guise of economic growth should not and must not be primarily for the foreign investor, developer or financer; it should not even be for the good of a few local entrepreneurs in partnership with foreign financers or investors. We believe that planned, regulated and orderly growth will take into account and safeguard the well-being of the local residents - and not be at their expense.

Moving on to the issue of political status, I ask the Council to bear with me for quoting at length from a number of sources. The purpose for this is to attempt to put status related matters in Palau into proper perspective.

Speaking before a joint session of the Third Olbiil Era Kelulau two Thursdays ago, President Ngiratkel Etpison had this to say:

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"I am personally in favour of free association relationship with the United States because I firmly believe that such a relationship is best for the economic prosperity of Palau. The United States is a powerful nation; its economy is second to none in the world. This generous country can definitely assist Palau in achieving self-sufficiency in the years ahead. Once we have attained that point, then we can proceed to work towards full independence, a status we all want to achieve at some appropriate time in the future."

In making the foregoing remark as an elected chief executive of the Republic, President Etpison echoed the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of the Palauan voting population. While in all the seven plebiscites on the Compact the 75-per-cent-majority vote as mandated by our Constitution was never garnered, the fact remains that the voting result in each and every such plebiscite never fell below a margin of 60 per cent. Such a resounding voice of the people, freely expressed in elections duly observed by missions of this Council, cannot and should not be ignored. Others may disagree vehemently with this conclusion and indeed claim that the Compact of Free Association has been disapproved or rejected seven times in a row. Indeed, that is their prerogative.

The 75-per-cent-vote requirement for approval of the Compact was a controversial issue before this Council, especially among the petitioners, at its fifty-fourth annual session in May 1987. In fact, the same question was raised last week during the hearing before Chairman de Lugo's Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs. Moreover, the question has been addressed recently in the context of whether the Palau Constitution needs to be amended to require a simple-majority vote and thus change the supreme law of the land

(Mr. Uherbelau, Special Adviser)

to conform with a bilateral treaty or to modify the Compact so as to be consistent with the Constitution.

The people of Palau need not, I submit, be asked to alter their Constitution in order to approve the Compact of Free Accosiation by a mere simple-majority vote. This can be done by following the agreement mutually reached in 1984 between United States Ambassador Fred Zeder and the late President and then Palau Status Ambassador Lazarus Salii which would have done away with the 75-per-cent approval requirement.

In a report to the late President Haruo I. Remeliik, Ambassador Salii wrote:

> "On 23 May 1984 Ambassador Zeder and I signed for our respective governments the attached Compact of Free Association between the Republic of Palau and the United States.
>
> "This new Compact is a significant improvement over the compact referred to the voters of Palau on 10 February 1983. This new Compact deletes all references to nuclear and other harmful substances from the defence and security powers given to the United States, including Section 314 (nuclear provision) of the original Compact which was disapproved by the voters in the last referendum."

The key to ratifying the Compact of Free Association in accordance with the Palau constitutional process - and by a simple majority at that - is to eliminate or excise the nuclear provision from the Compact and treat it as a separate defence-treaty matter. Article II of the Palau Constitution requires a simple-majority vote by the people to ratify an agreement which delegates major governmental powers to another country. A 75-per-cent-majority vote comes into the picture if, and only if, such agreement, compact or treaty

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allows entry to Palau of things nuclear. As has been ruled by the Palau Supreme Court, such nuclear-control provision of the Constitution governs and includes nuclear-powered vessels or aircraft. Section 324 of the current version of the Compact provides for this limited entry.

We informed the Council last week of a meeting between the joint political leadership of Palau and Secretary Marylin Meyers, Secretary Guerra and their key staff to exchange views on the feasibility of a dialogue on Compact modifications. While cognizant of Secretary Meyers' request for a list of intended changes, our side counter-proposed the creation of a working group to review and recommend what actions to take on those suggested changes. We believe that this is a sensible approach and that it should lead to eventual resolution of the current impasse on the political status question.

(Mr. Uherbelau, Special Adviser)

The Palau side was gladdened to hear Ms. Meyers advise us that:

"In looking at other alternatives, we believe only independence is a suitable alternative to free association. We intend during our presentation to tell the United Nations Trusteeship Council that we are willing to explore this possibility with you."

Mr. Wilkinson did just that in his opening statement to the Council last week.

Secretary Meyers went on to comment that:

"One possibility perhaps worthy of exploration is that Palau and the United States agree to tell the Trusteeship Council that our goal is to terminate trusteeship status by a fixed target date.

"Palau and the United States might then agree that if the Compact has not been adopted by a fixed time prior to the target date (say one year), Palau and the United States would commence negotiations on winding up the trusteeship, with the objective that Palau would become independent on mutually agreeable terms."

The Palauan delegation felt that this approach was reasonable, with one reservation. If "mutually agreeable terms" means conditional independence, we would rather agree with Chairman de Lugo that the independence option for Palau should be unconditional.

The Republic of Palau values its friendly and enduring relationship with the United States, its Administering Authority, which dates back to the liberation of our tiny island home towards the end of the Second World War. But our 44-year-old trust relationship must some day come to an end and be replaced with another arrangement. We still prefer a relationship that has as its foundation the precepts of free association. We seek to make some changes in the Compact so as to eliminate certain major obstacles or objections

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standing in the way of its successful ratification, and thus render it more acceptable to our people. We ask no more and no less.

Allow me to close by acknowledging the query raised by the representative of China concerning the United Nations visiting mission. By doing so, I should also like to extend my Government's warm invitation to Ms. Liu and to Mr. Berezovsky of the Soviet delegation to be part of that mission to Palau at the latter part of this year or early in 1992.

The PRESIDENT: Like Mr. Uherbelau, I am sorry that many of his colleagues have departed, but I can assure him that where the size of delegations is concerned, small is very beautiful.

I now call on Assistant Secretary Guerra.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): Before I begin, I would like to express appreciation on behalf of the Administering Authority for the very positive remarks made by the members during the general debate. Let me assure the Council that we will take them very much to heart.

We have arrived at the conclusion of another review of the administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. While the questions have been few in number, they have shown perception, and have elicited valuable information for Council members. I would like to supplement information already on the record with a few closing remarks.

Expanding on our delegation's response to petitioners and on my opening statement, I call the Council's attention to the fact that Secretary's Order No. 3142 was received favourably by many in Palau. Even previous critics of the efforts in the Olbiil Era Kelulau (OEK), the Palau National Congress,

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responded with praise. I am making available to the secretariat a letter from the OEK leadership, Senate President Joshua Koshiba, and House of Delegates Speaker Shiro Kyota, praising Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan for his action regarding the Order. In addition, I am giving the secretariat a copy of the resolution of the Koror State legislature praising budgetary action that arose from the implementation of the Order. I believe these documents will go a long way to reassure the Council and many of the concerned petitioners that the Order was issued in the best interest of Palau and of good administration under the Trusteeship Agreement.

I echo the sentiments of our chief of delegation that a Trusteeship Council visiting mission would be welcome in Palau. I would further add that we would extend that invitation to all members of the Council. It is through such first-hand experience that a true understanding of the economic and social achievements in the Islands can be fully appreciated. A visiting mission would be given full access to all parts of the Territory. Such a mission would find, without doubt, that there is no American or other military presence in the Islands, except for a 13-person detachment of Navy construction workers, known as the Seabees, who have been welcomed into the community, as they work on construction projects suggested by, and under the direction of, the Palauan Advisory Council.

As Council members and Palauan representatives have indicated, we are approaching the closure of the last of the Trust Territories created in 1947. This is a testament to the success of the Council in achieving the objectives set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. It is only fitting that all members of the Trusteeship Council should experience Palau first hand and sample the hospitality of these beautiful islands and their people.

(Ms. Guerra, Special Adviser)

In response to the very kind remarks made by the representative of the United Kingdom, I would like to assure him that in cooperation with Palauan authorities, the Administering Authority will continue to promote economic development. Such development, however, will occur in tandem with efforts to protect the culture and the extraordinary environment of the Palauan archipelago. Secretary's Order No. 3142 specifically includes a section placing a moratorium on commercial development in the Rock Islands until a Palau national master development plan is in place. I should add that the aid in drafting a Palau national master development plan was specifically included in the Secretary's Order at the request of the Palauan leadership.

(Ms. Guerra, Special Adviser)

While both the Department of the Interior and Palau are concerned with establishing a fair procedure that is beyond reproach, the Palauans themselves will be the ones who wrestle with, and decide on, the substantive issues, including the sectors for development, the amount of development, protection for culture, protection for the environment, placement of physical infrastructure and financing through impact fees and proportionally higher charges on developers. By helping Palau to bring these issues to a national debate in Palau, the United States, as Administering Authority, is providing Palau with the best possible tools for promoting private-sector economic development and at the same time protecting Palau's culture, environment and quality of life.

I am aware that the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands delegation formerly filled at least two rows in the Council Chamber. Now we are down to just a few seats. Some day in the near future - and I say this with only the best of intentions - these seats will be empty, and the goals of the Trusteeship System will have been attained. I am confident that with the strengthened communications and the relationship that we have today between the Administering Authority and Palau we shall continue to build on the progress that has been made this year. For our part, we are working actively in that direction. Perhaps in the very near future the new Trust Territory Office in Koror will be replaced by an American Embassy, as has occurred in the Freely Associated States, which until recently were also part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Mr. President, and members of the Council, let me say in conclusion that it has been a pleasure to be with you once again this year. I look forward to working with the Council over the next year. I thank members for all the courtesies that have been extended to me and the members of my delegation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Assistant Secretary Guerra for her additional clarifications and her warm concluding remarks.

Mr. WILKINSON (United States of America): I also, Mr. President, second the thanks expressed by those present for your fine leadership in guiding us through this annual session of the Trusteeship Council. You have kept us on the subject, assured the smooth and open handling of our agenda and given us the opportunity to meet the responsibilities that each of us has in the Council. I also want to thank the Vice-President for presiding at one important meeting, and for his important contributions in helping us proceed with our deliberations.

We are also grateful to the Secretariat for the preparation of documents for this session and for arrangements which made the session possible and productive. I would be remiss if in addition I did not extend our thanks to the interpreters, who no doubt rendered my statements in more comprehensible and articulate form than the original.

When the United States accepted its designation as Administering Authority for the Pacific Islands Territory we did not realize that this would be a task which would consume the better part of half a century. Nor, I am certain, did the Council realize what the extent of this assignment would be. We have endeavoured to meet our responsibilities fully, providing both guidance and support for the Trust Territory, now consisting solely of Palau.

As we have outlined in our annual report and in the statements which I and members of my delegation have made to the Council, we continue to provide resources and expertise to Palau. Our objective, and the objective of Palau, is to bring the trusteeship to an end at an early date. We believe that the trusteeship has served its basic purpose of providing Palau with

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

infrastructure, education and economic development so that it can not only survive, but prosper, under whatever political system the people of Palau may choose.

It is not our intention to force Palau to make a decision concerning its political status. Rather, it is our goal to create conditions under which Palau can make its own choice as expeditiously as possible, safe in the knowledge that it has the means to make the transition from trusteeship to its chosen status.

I think the Council is already aware of what our general plan of action will be during the course of the next year on the issue of status. We continue to believe that the Compact now on the table offers the best solution to the status question. The Compact would assure a continuing flow of financial support for Palau while enabling Palau to become a member of the international community, as have two other former elements of the Trust Territory.

As indicated earlier, we have agreed to receive from Palau a list of suggestions which it believes would be helpful in gaining the support needed to win approval of the Compact. We will examine any proposed modifications carefully and decide, in the closest consultation with the Government of Palau, how best to proceed. I cannot give a time frame or deadline for this activity, but I can assure you, Mr. President, that we are ready to act with all deliberate speed.

If, despite these efforts, free association continues to elude us, we believe, as also indicated earlier, Palau should give serious consideration to the possibility of independence. We do not see independence as coming precipitously, but, rather, after a period of preparation and under conditions

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

to be agreed between us, the Administering Authority and the Government of Palau. The Council has seen many Territories formerly under trusteeship enter the family of nations as independent States. We believe that Palau could successfully pursue this option if it so chose. In any event, trusteeship is a transitory status, and we hope that it will be possible for Palau to move on to the next stage in its development at an early date.

Until that welcome time arrives I wish to assure the Council again that the United States will meet its trusteeship obligations fully. We take our responsibilities seriously and will carry them out to the best of our ability. Assistant Secretary Guerra has already provided the Council with further details on our administration of Palau, and she gave the Council today a further perspective of her Department. Mr. Uherbelau has similarly given a crucially important perspective and observations on these issues on behalf of the Government of Palau.

Overall, we find that this annual session has provided us with a good opportunity to review our activities in Palau. The preparations for the meetings, the statements by the petitioners and the questions by other Council members stimulate us to endeavour to perform our tasks even better.

During the course of this meeting, members have mentioned the possibility of a United Nations mission's visiting Palau and preparing a report on its findings for the Council. We are beginning to approach three years since the last such Mission, so scheduling another trip would be in accordance with past practice.

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

I wish to confirm that the United States would welcome such a visit at a time mutually convenient for members of the Council and for Palau, perhaps by early in 1992, which would allow a report to be prepared for the Council's consideration at its annual session approximately one year from now. Participants will need time to prepare for such a visit, as will officials of Palau, and we will be in touch with all concerned to facilitate early decisions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States. I would only add, with all due diffidence, that it is fairly easy to keep members of the Council to one subject when there is only one subject to discuss.

That concludes, as I understand it, the closing remarks by representatives of the Administering Authority. I want to thank very warmly all those who have come from Washington D.C. and from the Trust Territory itself to inform us of recent developments and to give us the benefit of their experience. I would extend a particular word of thanks to Assistant Secretary Guerra from Washington, to Mr. Uherbelau from Palau and perhaps a special word to Mr. MacPhetre, who I gather has been a consistent and faithful follower of this rather strange animal. Thank you all very much. I believe I speak on behalf of all members of the Council in wishing you all a safe journey home.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I am given to understand that the report of the Secretary-General on credentials will be available tomorrow. The Council will therefore consider that item at its next meeting.

As regards the report of the Drafting Committee concerning its conclusions and recommendations, I also understand that the report will be ready by noon tomorrow, Friday, 10 May. In order to facilitate our work I should like to suggest that the report of the Drafting Committee be made available to all members of the Council tomorrow afternoon, before the weekend. The official version of the report will be out on Monday, 13 May.

At this point in time I am not going to suggest a precise timetable for our concluding meetings. I think we shall probably want to have brief informal consultations on Monday morning, followed by a formal meeting at

(The President)

which the representative of the Drafting Committee will introduce the report, and it may then be necessary to adopt it formally on Tuesday, 14 May. What I propose to do, if I may, is to ask the Secretariat to be in touch with all members of the Council tomorrow about the precise timetable for our concluding meetings.

I hope that that procedure is agreeable to members of the Council. If there are no comments, I shall take it that members agree to the procedures I have outlined.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next meeting of the Trusteeship Council, therefore, will be held, subject to confirmation tomorrow by the Secretariat, on Monday, 13 May, probably following informal consultations and at a time to be specified by the Secretariat to all members.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.